Export of medicinal herbs to China

1640. SHRIMATI SUSHMASWARAJ: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

whether it is a fact that huge quantity of medicinal herb is being exported to China where from they are re-exported to the International market on higher prices;

the attempts being made by India for exporting the medicinal herbs directly to the global market;

whether any special scheme has been formulated by the Government for the supply of the medicinal herbs in view of its increasing demand in coming days; and

if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) No, Sir. As per the statistics collated by the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistic (DGCIS), Government of India, India's total export of medicinal plants and products in the year 2006-07 (April-March) amounted to US $ 200 million. The Indian export of medicinal plant to China during 2006-07 were only USS 2.06 million which in no way can be called a major export for India.

(c) and (d) Government have introduced several facilities and schemes to provide policy and fmancial support for enhancement of R&D activities and development of farming, product diversification, export production and exports of Indian medicinal plants, herbs and herbal products. In fact, a special support scheme named Vishesh Krishi & Gramin Udyog Yojana has been introduced by Government to encourage the trade to step up export development activities and export of minor forest produce including medicinal plants and herbs. Under this scheme, exporters would be entitled to receive Duty Credit Script at the rate of 5% of FOB exports earnings. Besides, SHEFEXIL, the Export Promotion Council, also undertakes various export promotion measures like organizing buyer seller meets in India and abroad, undertaking trade delegations, holding of seminars, workshops and exhibitions for boosting the export of medicinal plants and herbs from the country.

Production and price of cement

†1641. SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

whether it is a fact that the production of cement in the country has not increased despite of about 20 per cent increase in its prices in the last one year, if so, the reasons therefore;

whether it is also a fact that about SO per cent units are running losses despite increase **in** the profit as a result of price rise; and

the production cost of domestic cement in comparison to the production cost of foreign cement and the reasons for the difference in cost?

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.